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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **MSDE Announces Release of the Empirical Study of Maryland’s College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard, Completed by the American Institutes for Research**

*Research study investigates the alignment between Maryland’s College and Career Ready Academic Content Standards and postsecondary expectations, as well as how well the interim CCR standard, and alternative specifications of the standard, predict postsecondary progress.*

**BALTIMORE (September 14, 2023)** – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is proud to announce the submission and publication of the final report of the empirical research study of the college and career readiness standard, completed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future has a central goal of ensuring that all Maryland public school students are college and career ready by the end of 10th grade, or by graduation, signifying an ability to transition successfully to postsecondary coursework at a two- or four-year institution or to the workforce. The Blueprint set the interim College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard to be measured by meeting or exceeding the English Language Arts and math content standards on standardized assessments.

The Blueprint required MSDE to commission an empirical study of the interim CCR standard and its adequacy to identify the students who have demonstrated their knowledge of English language arts and mathematics that enables the student to be successful in entry level credit bearing courses or postsecondary education training at a State community college. The study also compared Maryland’s CCR standards against national and international best practices and considered potential sources of bias in assessments.

MSDE contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution that conducts behavioral and social science research, to conduct a multi-part study of the CCR standard. Findings from the predictive validity and the content and standards alignment analyses include the following key takeaways, within each of the study’s four objectives:

- **Objective 1. Identify Knowledge and Skills Required to Be College and Career Ready**
  - Content knowledge considered important for college readiness is covered in the Maryland K–12 content standards.
  - Skills for success, including collaboration and healthy work habits, are critical for CCR.

- Top-performing education systems provide formal CCR counseling early in students' journeys and clear options for college and career pathways.
- **Objective 2. Assess the Alignment Between Maryland's College and Career Ready Academic Content Standards and Postsecondary Expectations**
  - In general, the high school English language arts (ELA), math, and science content standards align to the content expectations of college course content in developmental and first-year credit-bearing courses.
  - Maryland's high school ELA and math standards align to content knowledge expectations for certificate-granting programs using two national frameworks that articulate workforce skills.
- **Objective 3. Assess How Well the Interim CCR Standard and Alternative Specifications of the Standard Predict Postsecondary Progress**
  - The interim CCR standard, utilizing state assessments, correctly classified about half to two-thirds of students as college ready or not college ready at the end of Grade 10.
  - Adding an alternative way to meet the CCR standard with high school grade point average (HSGPA) increased the percentage of students who meet the CCR standard and improved accuracy rates for predicting first-year college credits earned.
- **Objective 4. Identify Potential Areas of Bias Within Assessments Used to Determine CCR**
  - Standardized assessments are frequently subject to cultural bias.
  - Inequities exist in students' opportunities to prepare for assessments.

“The rigor and quality of AIR’s research is a testament to the dedication that all stakeholders and partners have as Maryland focuses on its students and their success. The analyses and recommendations will be invaluable as we actualize our Strategic Plan and set a new evidence-based CCR standard,” says Maryland State Board of Education President Clarence C. Crawford.

In accordance with Blueprint statute, MSDE has also submitted this final report of the empirical research study, completed by American Institutes for Research, to the Maryland General Assembly, the Governor, and the Accountability and Implementation Board.

In the coming months, MSDE looks forward to reviewing and considering the analyses and recommendations presented in this study, as well as engaging with stakeholders and soliciting feedback. MSDE will work with the State Board of Education to propose and adopt a new CCR standard that is a strong predictor of postsecondary success and ensures equitable access for every Maryland student.

“AIR completed a multifaceted, best-in-class investigation into the predictors of postsecondary success and the alignment of high school standards to postsecondary expectations,” says State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “The study is full of crucial insights into ensuring that Maryland sets a CCR standard that is aligned with national research and ensures equitable access for all students.”

This study will help Maryland continue to lead the way to provide a world-class education for every student enrolled in public school, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, zip code, socioeconomic status, or the language spoken at home.

More information, the full report, as well as related resources are available at:

<https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/ccr-research-study/>

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